



**U.S. Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of Texas**

**Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney**

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Shana Jones, Special Assistant  
Daryl Fields, Public Information Officer  
(210) 384-7440

October 9, 2007

**JUAREZ MOTHER SENTENCED IN EXTORTION / RANSOM CASE**

**United States Attorney Johnny Sutton** announced that in El Paso today, Maria Gloria Hernandez-Castillo, a Mexican citizen residing in Juarez, was sentenced to 51 months in federal prison in connection with an extortion / ransom investigation.

In addition, United States District Judge Philip R. Martinez ordered that Hernandez-Castillo be deported after completing her prison term.

In July, a federal jury found Hernandez-Castillo guilty of one count each of receiving the proceeds of extortion and receiving or possessing ransom money. The jury acquitted her daughter, 21-year-old Sara Jahzeel Gonzalez, a Mexican national living in El Paso, of both charges.

Testimony during the trial revealed that on March 25, 2007, Hernandez-Castillo knowingly collected \$65,000 in ransom money from Elaine Luchene. Luchene had traveled from Chicago to El Paso to secure the release of her friend, Charlie Waters. At the time, Waters was being held captive in Juarez by unknown individuals until he settled an alleged drug debt. Court records indicate that he had been held for approximately 6 weeks while Luchene raised the money to secure his release. FBI agents arrested Hernandez and Gonzalez in El Paso following the ransom exchange.

This investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Assistant United States Attorneys William F. Lewis and Craig Russell prosecuted this case on behalf of the Government.

#####